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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/12/2017
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [VE](#)
SUBJECT: BRV RESPONDS TO HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT DOWNES
FOR REASON 1.4 (d)

¶1. (SBU) BRV officials reacted angrily to the Venezuela section of the March 6 release of the Department's 2006 Human Rights Report, but their response has been overshadowed by other events. BRV Human Rights Ombudsman German Mundarain said the USG lacked the "moral authority" to speak on human rights, and accused the United States of being the "most bellicose (country) in the world." Mundarain claimed the purpose of the report was to "stigmatize" those countries that disagree with the policies of the Bush administration. He also said the report has the "same value as an ethics manual written by Al Capone." Attorney General Isaias Rodriguez said the report is "politicized" and that its sole purpose is to discredit Venezuelan institutions and the judicial system. The Ambassador responded March 9 to BRV comments, saying that in the future he hopes the BRV "focuses less on the messenger and more on the message."

¶2. (C) COMMENT: As in previous years, BRV officials condemned the USG's human rights report in general terms but did not refute specific observations made in the report. For example, BRV officials did not contest the addition of 13 political prisoners in this year's report. It is possible that the BRV's limited response to the report's release can be attributed to the government's focus on other high-profile events, including the aggressive attacks by BRV officials at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights hearings in Washington.

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